

Testimony of the Connecticut Association of Schools

RE:

S.B. 1097 AN ACT CONCERNING REVISIONS TO THE EDUCATION REFORM ACT OF 2012.

Good afternoon, my name is Don Macrino. I am the principal of Waterford High School, a member of the Connecticut Association of Schools' executive board, and a board member of the National Association of Secondary School Principals. As principal of Waterford High School, a SEED pilot school, and CAS, I am here to express my concerns regarding two provisions of S.B. 1097.

Section 1A of the bill would require districts to implement the new evaluation system with every certified professional in the district in school year 2014-2015. This would eliminate the options developed by PEAC, all of which allowed for a phase in during school year 2013-2014. My school is in the midst of the full implementation of the SEED plan this year. As a high school in the SEED pilot, while the plan holds many valuable and positive elements, there are two major flaws.

The training program is not sufficient to produce qualified evaluators in its present form. I am referring to the Teach Scape training program using the Danielson model. The training method and the assessments contradict the very instructional practices that Charlotte Danielson promotes. The other is the number of evaluations required by each administrator.

For example, I am responsible for one third of the ninety high school staff which is thirty teachers. Thirty teachers times six evaluations are one hundred and eighty evaluations. That number does not include the pre and post conferences which must take place for the formal observations. This adds one hundred and eighty additional meetings to the administrator's schedule for a total of three hundred and sixty evaluation related time commitments. This is an impossible task if I am to carry out evaluations and my other duties, and do each well. I strongly support the PEAC options which allow for phasing the evaluation plan in during the 2013 – 2014 year.

Section 1B of the proposed bill gives authority for the evaluation of teachers to professional development and evaluation committees. It removes that authority from boards of education. It is only boards of education and superintendents who are ultimately responsible for student achievement, not professional development committees nor evaluation committees. In that an evaluation system is designed and implemented solely to improve instruction and raise student achievement, evaluation system should not be a mandatory subject of bargaining and should not rest in the hands of professional development or evaluation committees, rather with boards of education.